

## Dissolving Enemy Images

Imagine that for each person you have a "should" about there is a cord connecting them to you, and as you go about your day they drag along behind you. They get in your car, the shower, and your bed with you. They eat at your table. It is exhausting to imagine. The aim of this worksheet is to free up this energy and release the images that weigh you down.

The first step is to recognize when enemy images are present in our minds. These images operate at a semi-conscious level, meaning I am not always aware when I am seeing a person as a "bad guy" who needs to be punished, corrected, condemned, or otherwise changed in some way. Enemy Images aren't reserved for harsh judgments; they also occur with the feelings of annoyance or irritation.

Remember that we strive to do this to have inner peace and the intention is not to agree with the actions, to compromise, or change our opinions. **The intention is connection.**

All such enemy images are harmful for two reasons:

1. They reduce our power with the people we see as enemies because whenever we hold moralistic judgments of others, our ability to empathize with them and see our common humanity is compromised.
2. They create suffering inside of us, even when we do not speak to or interact with the person we see as an enemy.

*Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves.*

*- Carl Jung*

## Worksheet

1. The Story

- a. Write a specific action that was taken by the person who you have an enemy image of.

Example: Donna, one of Karen's colleagues, wrote an email saying she was the longest-standing trainer in the area and Karen's understanding about something was incorrect.

- b. How would you frame the other person's intention in a negative way? (assume the worst)

Example: She wants to make me feel stupid for my ideas. She's trying to shut me down and prove that she knows more than me.

2. Being Heard (empathy for yourself)

- a. What are your feelings related to this action?

Example: Irritation. Frustration. Annoyance. Helplessness.

- b. What needs of yours are these feelings pointing to?

Example: Respect. Mutuality. Consideration. Power-With.

3. Imagine Their Humanity (Empathy for the other)

- a. What could the other person be feeling at the moment they acted?

Example: Concerned. Sad. Worried. Helpless.

- b. What needs would you guess are related to their feelings?

Example: To be seen. Appreciated. Effectiveness. Contribution. To Matter.

- c. How would you frame the other person's intention in a positive way?

Example: Donna cares deeply about the work that we do to reduce violence and share peaceful ways to address conflict. She wants to contribute information that she believes will help us be more successful in our efforts.



4. Rewriting  
the Story

- a. Could  
can it

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Example: Donna admires me and sees great potential in what I can accomplish in the world which is why she engages in conversation over email to contribute to my life.

- b. Imagine a scenario that would help you have - as close as possible- no blame for the person. Is there something I don't know? What am I missing? Where is my blind spot?

Example: Donna is sensing her own mortality due to her age and health issues that have decreased her ability to travel and lead trainings. The best way she can see to contribute to the nonviolent movement is to mentor younger trainers and board members.